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FIRE SAFE TENNESSEE UNVEILS ADOPT-A-SENIOR PROGRAM

Nashville, TN. – Fire Safe Tennessee and the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority are launching Tennessee's first Adopt-a-Senior program, a public-private partnership designed to help seniors protect themselves and their homes from fire.

Tennessee has the nation's second-highest rate of fire death, and statistics show that seniors are at especially high risk of dying in structure fires. In order to reach out to seniors, Fire Safe Tennessee created Adopt-a-Senior – a program that any church and community group can implement as an ongoing ministry or community project.

The Nashville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta is pioneering this effort in Tennessee, with a program that will involve 75 Nashville-area seniors. Working with the Metro Nashville Fire Department, Delta Sigma Theta will host a fire prevention seminar, provide and install new smoke alarms in the seniors' homes, and commit to an annual visit to refresh the batteries and check seniors' home for fire hazards.

The sorority's Social Action Chair, Sen. Thelma Harper of Nashville, urged her sisters statewide to take up the program during its kickoff event Tuesday.

"This outreach to seniors will save Tennesseans' lives," said Gov. Phil Bredesen, who congratulated Delta Sigma Theta for being the first to take on the Adopt-a-Senior program. "This program combines the best Tennessee Volunteer tradition with Delta Sigma Theta's strong community service ethic. I know others will follow their lead."

"We want to make it easy for community groups, civic clubs, scout troops or churches to adapt this outreach program to their own communities," said State Fire Marshal Paula Flowers. "The smoke alarms are made available through the generous involvement of BRK Brands, the makers of First Alert products. And our local fire departments are enthusiastic about involving new community partners in fire prevention."

Tennessee Titan and Fire Safe Tennessee spokesman Erron Kinney participated in the kickoff event Tuesday with Delta Sigma Theta. "As a volunteer firefighter, I know there's nothing more effective than mobilizing within the community to promote fire prevention. This isn't a big expensive government program – it's better than that. It's community service at its best."

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